

**New Jersey State Park Service**  
**FIRST DAY HIKEs JANUARY 1, 2016**  
Project Report (Narrative)  
1/11/16

**New Jersey State Parks' Visitors Traveled 3,420 miles on First Day Hikes**

In New Jersey, on the first day of the New Year, over 960 people started 2016 on the right foot by participating in free, guided First Day Hikes in New Jersey's State Parks. Across the nation, the First Day Hikes in America's State Parks attracted 55,985 participants who covered 133,832 miles on 1,168 guided hikes, trots, canoe and bicycle trips, ski outings and more. Many more people got their first day exercise by venturing out on their own in less formal trips to state parks while many others made visits to national and local parks.

New Jersey's State Parks staff and volunteers hosted 21 different "First Day Hikes" (18 hikes, 2 bike rides, and one horseback ride) at 16 different State Parks, Forests, Historic Sites, and Recreation Areas for 961 people who walked/rode a total of 3,420 miles. On January 3, another 300 approx. participated in a 'real time' history hike at Princeton Battlefield State Park.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's State Park Service is grateful to everyone who volunteered their time to make this possible. "Thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers, hundreds of hikers, riders, families, children, and dogs experienced the best of New Jersey's outdoors on the first day of the year," said NJ State Parks Assistant Director, John Trontis. "Hopefully, this sets a trend for a healthy and happy lifestyle – one that we are delighted to encourage"

This was NJ's fifth year participating in America's State Parks First Day Hikes program.



**24 hikers at Brendan T. Byrne State Forest** – *"They had a fabulous time. They are looking forward to doing it again next year!"* [Submitted by Hike Leader, Eric McKinley]

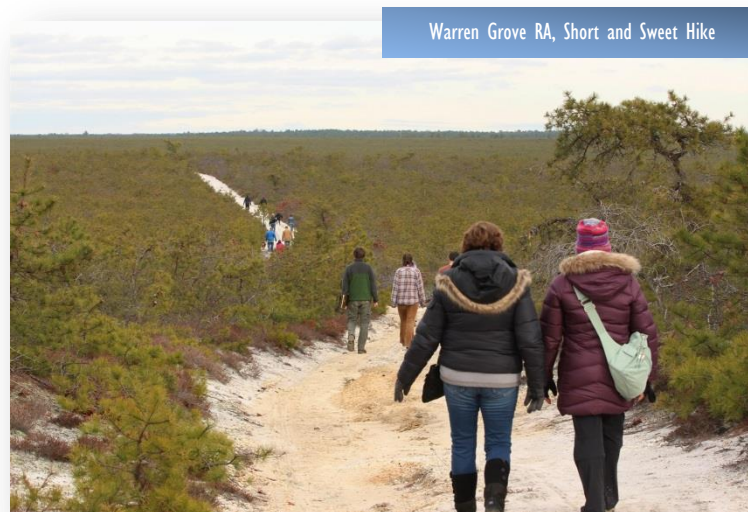
**Bass River State Forest, First Day Hike in NJ's First Forest**  
*"Last Friday's First Day Hike at Bass River State Forest was wonderful. Nothing like a breath of fresh air, a nice hike, and a compatible group of fellow trekkers to start the New Year off right! Our visit to the historic Contact Station (cabin) was a treat. Cynthia showed us the cabin's interior complete with an architect's blueprint of this circa 1940 building. The CCC "boys" did a fabulous construction job, one that I hope can be saved for future generations to enjoy."* [Email from participant]

**Johnson Ferry House, Washington Crossing State Park History Hike**, "Ferry to Ferry" *"Hi Nancy, Just a quick note to thank you for the very informative hike today. I learned so much from your talk and really appreciated all of the new information about the crossing and the history of the area and Johnson Ferry house that I learned from you today. ... You brought history to life today on a cold day and I really enjoyed it."* [Email from participant]

**Warren Grove Recreation Area (Bass River State Forest), “Short and Sweet” hike in the Pines Plains.** *“Ahhhhhh ... Thirty-nine people and 4 dogs enjoyed a hearty start to the New Year hiking the NJ Pine Plains in Warren Grove. We hiked, true to the name “Short and Sweet”, 2.5 miles. ... We actually began our outing with an 8 AM breakfast at Lucille’s, filling the small restaurant with 25 folks in an effort to fuel our bodies for the hike. ... Seventeen of the people on today’s hike have previously participated in previous 1st day hikes in NJ. Youngest participant was 4 years old, oldest was 89! Included were teachers, naturalists, retirees, botanists, college students, meteorologist, machinists, moms, dads, grandparents, young-uns’ and one state worker ;) Longest distance traveled [to get here] was a tie between French Creek PA and New York City, NY. We finished our hike with pot luck snacks and socializing..... wonderful.”* (Note: “short” refers not only to the length of the hike, but also references the very short Pigmy Pines growing in this area) [Submitted by Hike Leader, Terry Schmidt]



Stokes State Forest, First Day Hike to the Tower



Warren Grove RA, Short and Sweet Hike



Waterloo Village Historic Site, Waterloo — A Place of New Beginnings